

second number, under a predetermined extraction condition, to be extracted on the basis of said first number of boundary candidates; and

allowing a boundary between said object and said background to be identified.

112. (New) A device manufacturing method including a lithography process,

wherein

exposure is performed by using the exposure method according to claim 75 in said lithography process.

113. (New) A device manufacturing method including a lithography process,

wherein

exposure is performed by using the exposure method according to claim 92 in said lithography process.

114. (New) A device manufacturing method including a lithography process,

wherein

exposure is performed by using the exposure method according to claim 106 in said lithography process.

115. (New) The method according to claim 77, wherein said first number is not less than three, and said second number is two --

REMARKS

Favorable consideration of this application, as presently amended, is respectfully requested.

The present Preliminary Amendment is submitted to place the above-identified application in more proper format under United States practice. By the present Preliminary Amendment original Claims 1-57 have been cancelled and new Claims 58-115 have been

presented for examination. New Claims 58-115 are believed to be self-evident from the original disclosure, including original Claims 1-57, and thus are not deemed to raise any issues of new matter.

The present application is believed to be in condition for a full and thorough examination on the merits. An early and favorable consideration of the present application is hereby respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-57 (Deleted).

Claims 58-115 (New).

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